

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01543 080701Z

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1543

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, ENRG, SP

SUBJ: USN REFUELING IN SPANISH PORTS

REF: MADRID 1029

1. AT JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MARCH 6, I APPEALED
SPANISH DECISION TO SUSPEND REFUELING ON USN SHIPS IN SPANISH PORTS
(OTHER THAN THOSE WITH US FACILITIES), STRESSING FOLLOWING POINTS:
(1) TRADITIONALLY US AND SPAIN HAVE REFUELED EACH OTHERS WARSHIPS
IN THEIR PORTS ON RECIPROCAL BASIS; (2) US HAS IN THE PAST AND WILL
IN THE FUTURE PROVIDE FUEL TO SPANISH NAVY UNITS IN US PORTS DURING
VISITS, TRAINING ASSIGNMENTS, AND SHAKEDOWN CRUSIES; (3) PROVISION
OF FUELS TO VISITING US WARSHIPS ENVISAGED IN AFC (ANNEX 9 PARA
10); (4) WHILE AMOUNTS OF FUEL TAKEN IN SPANISH PORTS ARE NOT
LARGE, THEY MAY BE IMPORTANT IN OPERATIONAL TERMS BECAUSE OF
FACTORS OF TIMING AND LOCATION AND 6TH FLEET MUST BE REASONABLY
ASSURED OF RELIABLE FUEL SUPPLIES FOR EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND
FLEXIBILITY.
(5) SINCE USN SUPPLIES FAR MORE TO SPANISH NAVY FROM ITS SUPPLIES
THAN IT RECEIVES AT SPANISH PORTS, REFUELING FROM SPANISH SOURCES
SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS REPAYMENT IN KIND FOR FUELS ADVANCED
RATHER THAN NET DRAWDOWN. GENERAL EADE SECONDED THESE ARGUMENTS
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PAGE 02 MADRID 01543 080701Z

STRESSING THAT FLEXIBILITY OF 6TH FLEET ENHANCED BY ASSURANCES IT

CAN REFUEL AT NUMBER OF PORTS. ADDING THAT ACCESS TO FUEL SOURCES AT SPANISH PORTS MAY MEAN SAVINGS AS THESE SOURCES MAY BE CLOSER TO 6TH FLEET AREAS OF OPERATION.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA MAURI REPLIED THAT SPAIN WOULD BE HAPPY TO PROVIDE FUELS IF THOSE FUELS WERE HERS FREELY TO GIVE. REGRETABLELY SPAIN HAS RECEIVED PETROLEUM SUPPLIES CONDITIONALLY FROM ARAB COUNTRIES SINCE MIDDLE EAST WAR AND THE SUPPLIES THUS RECEIVED ARE NOT OF SPAIN'S FREE DISPOSITION. FOR SPAIN TO DISPOSE OF THOSE FUELS FREELY IN VIOLATION OF ARAB WISHES WOULD CREATE SERIOUS RISK OF ARAB EMBARGO.

3. AS ALTERNATIVE FOREIGN MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT US CONSIDER ESTABLISHING ITS OWN DEPOSITS OF FUEL AT SPANISH PORTS. HE ADDED THAT IF THIS PRESENTED TOO MANY PROBLEMS, US MIGHT CONSIDER AN ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY ITS UNITS WOULD DRAW SPANISH FUELS IN SPANISH PORTS ON A LOAN BASIS FOR LATER REPLACEMENT IN KIND FROM US STOCKS. FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSED THAT NORMALLY SPANISH FULLY WILLING TO FUEL US UNITS AS IS CUSTOMARY AND THAT ITS RELUCTANCE AT THIS TIME STEMS FROM ABNORMAL POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT PRESUMABLY, IF PRESS REPORTS CORRECT, WILL DISAPPEAR IN THE NEAR FUTURE WHEN ARABS LIFT OIL EMBARGO ON US.

4. I POINTED OUT THAT FOREIGN MINISTER'S SUGGESTION FOR ADVANCES OF SPANISH FUELS TO BE REPAID IN KIND WAS VARIATION OF SUGGESTION I HAD HOPED TO DEVELOP EARLIER. SINCE SPANISH NAVY NOW DRAWS THREE TIMES AS MUCH FUEL FROM USN STOCKS IN SPAIN AS USN UNITS DRAW FROM SPANISH STOCKS IN SPANISH PORTS, SPAIN COULD CONSIDER FUELS PROVIDED TO USN UNITS AS A REPAYMENT IN KIND FOR FUELS ADVANCED TO SPANISH NAVY. I EXPLAINED THAT US WELL AWARE OF SPAIN'S PROBLEMS WITH THE ARABS AND OFFERED THIS SUGGESTION AS A POSSIBLE WAY OF CIRCUMVENTING IT.

5. FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN UNAWARE THAT USN WAS PROVIDING THREE TIMES AS MUCH FUEL TO SPANISH NAVY AS USN IS RECEIVING. HE STATED THAT IF THIS INFORMATION CORRECT, IT WOULD POSSIBLY YIELD A SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES NOW BESETTING US. HE ADDED THAT THIS ASPECT WOULD BE STUDIED CAREFULLY.

6. COMMENT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO SUGGESTION
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PAGE 03 MADRID 01543 080701Z

THAT FUEL SUPPLY TO USN UNITS BE CONSIDERED AS REPAYMENT IN KIND IS POSITIVE AND HOPEFUL. MOREOVER SPANISH SEEM CONVINCED THAT ISSUE WILL BECOME IRRELEVANT IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE WHEN ARABS LIFT OIL EMBARGO. NEVERTHELESS IN ABSENCE OF ASSURANCES WHEN ARABS LIFT OIL EMBARGO. NEVERTHELESS IN ABSENCE OF ASSURANCES THAT ARAB EMBARGO OVER, WE INTEND TO FOLLOW UP BY PRESSING FOR PROMPT AND REASONABLY EXPLICIT ASSURANCES FROM SPANISH THAT THEY WILL NOW REFUEL VISITING USN UNITS.

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